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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to look at the variety of coeducational housing which presently exists at 10 colleges and universities in the United States. Each of the 10 colleges is discussed individually, the physical arrangement explained and regulations and response to the program discussed. Advantages mentioned for coeducational housing include: (1) more effective use of space, (2) provision of a natural setting which encourages interaction between men and women on a casual basis leading to better mutual understanding, (3) improved social behavior, and (4) the development of a greater variety of creative programs. Disadvantages mentioned are: (1) making the residence functional after hours, (2) lessening leadership opportunities for women, (3) coeducational staffing problems, and (4) problems concerning differential regulations. However, most of the disadvantages can be overcome through careful planning. Coeducational housing appears to be an exciting addition to American education. (KJ)

ED034255

David A. McCoster

A LOOK AT COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN THE UNITED STATES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

The existence of coeducational housing on college and university campuses in the United States can boast only a short history - about a decade. Although coeducational housing has found its way into relatively few housing programs, it takes form in a wide variety of designs and is operated on the basis of widely differing philosophies. Thus, on one end of the continuum is the institution that constructs dormitories which can house men or women or both merely to accommodate year-to-year fluctuation in the male-female ratio and does not view coeducational living as part of the educational program. On the other end of the continuum is the institution which builds coeducational complexes almost exclusively and considers the coeducational living experience as an integral part of the total educational process.

Because of its newness and because of the ambiguity which surrounds the concept, it is not surprising that casual mention of the term coeducational housing often elicits a dubious, even shocked response from the layman, the faculty member, and even the not-too-well-informed personnel administrator. Nor is it surprising that in educational materials coeducational housing takes on a definition according to the type of design and philosophy to which the author is referring.

As it was implied earlier, it is almost impossible to arrive at a definition of coeducational housing which will apply in every

context. In conducting a survey of residence hall programs Robert M. Crane pre-defined coeducational housing as "adjacent buildings with restricted access to single-sex living units, but with maximum coeducational use of all public areas such as dining rooms, recreation rooms, and lounges."[1] Such an arrangement may be found at Michigan State University, Indiana University, and the University of Illinois. But this definition is too narrow. At the University of Rochester and at Long Island University men and women live on alternate floors of coed buildings, at U. C. L. A. men and women live on divided floors in coeducational buildings, and at St. Lawrence there are separate wings for men and women with common lounge facilities. Thus it would seem that until terms are chosen and used for more specific designation, coeducational housing as a general term may be used to mean rooms for men and women in separate buildings with a central structure for joint use and/or a coeducational structure divided horizontally or vertically into separate living units for men and women.[2] In this paper I will use the terms coeducational center or complex to designate the separate building arrangement, coed unit to mean a building divided vertically, and coed dormitory or living center to mean a residence hall divided horizontally.

It will be the purpose of this paper to take a look at the variety of coeducational housing which presently exists at several colleges and universities in the United States, to outline some of the advantages and disadvantages, and to explore the outlook for

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[1]"More Colleges are Planning Coed Housing - Here's What They Hope to Gain," College and University Business, XXXIII (December, 1962), 48. And "Co-ed and Co-academic Residence Halls," American Institute of Architects Journal, XL (September, 1963), 79.

[2]Harold C. Riker with Frank G. Lopez. College Students Live There (New York, 1961), pp.53-56.

coeducational housing in the future and its implications for the field of student personnel. The view will necessarily be limited by the sparsity of materials that were available to me and lack of time and know-how for formal research. Except for the material on Indiana University, my major source of information is derived from responses to a questionnaire[1] sent to the housing officers of several institutions with coed housing. Two other major sources of information are journal articles and brochures and other supplementary materials sent to me by the institutions included in the report. The following section is a summary of my findings on the coeducational housing at ten institutions of higher learning in the United States.

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[1]A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this report.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

At ~~the~~ Indiana University there has been some form of co-educational housing for ten years.[1] In 1962 there were six large living centers, four of which were coeducational, thus affording the students a choice in deciding the type of living situation best suited to their needs. The coeducational centers include separate buildings for men and women, each with individual lounges and recreational areas in addition to lounge space, recreation rooms, dining rooms, snack bar, and library for joint use by men and women.

Responsible for each center is a Head Counselor, who may be a man or a woman, since Indiana saw a merger in 1959 of the staffs of the Dean of Women and the Dean of Men. The Head Counselor is a member of the Dean of Student's staff, advises student government in the center, supervises fifteen to twenty Resident Assistants, and coordinates student personnel services within the center. Thus each center has its own personnel staff, but it is an all-residence staff which coordinates activities and provides in-service training for the center staffs. The joint staff arrangement gives equal opportunity to men and women for leadership positions.

Student government is also a function of the living center. Discipline is handled by student government through encouragement

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[1]This and the remainder of my information on Indiana University is taken from: Elizabeth A. Greenleaf. "Co-educational Residence Halls: An Evaluation," Journal of the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, XXV, No. 3 (April, 1962), 106-111.

of discussion concerning problems and through judicial boards. Student committees plan activities and programs for the center. Officers and committee members are from both sexes, but men are more likely to run for and be elected to the major offices.

In her evaluation of the coeducational housing at Indiana, Elizabeth Greenleaf makes her assessment on the basis of what she believes to be the basic objectives of residence halls in general and their contributions to campus life. She writes that residence halls should ". . . provide a stimulating environment for the student's major goal of satisfactory academic achievement and at the same time opportunities for leadership development through the benefits of co-curricular activities."[1] She concludes that "In view of the goals of residence halls and in view of practical and efficient operation, the co-ed halls have many advantages for students, for the university, and for those responsible for hall activities."[2] For the university there are two major advantages - that of more effective and economical use of space (to accommodate either men or women when the ratio fluctuates) and that of combined staffing which, with a shortage of trained staff, makes available the most qualified leadership, whether it be a man or a woman.

Coeducational living at Indiana seems to provide advantages for the students in the areas of social education and social activities. Students become more conscious of dress, and opportunity for mixing of men and women on a casual daily basis makes formal "mixers" unnecessary. Social events are easier to arrange when much of the

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[1]"Co-educational Residence Halls: An Evaluation," p.106.

[2]Ibid., p.108.

"red tape" of exchanging meal tickets, dining room permissions, and finding chaperones is eliminated. The coed arrangement provides a ready-made social life for the shy student who might otherwise hesitate to attend social events, as well as a setting for casual friendships, which lead to better understanding of attitudes and interests between men and women. Miss Greenleaf points out that general social behavior patterns seem to be better in the coed environment, and that when behavior problems do arise, they become the problem of the student governing bodies.

There had been no indication in 1962 that grade point averages of students in coed centers differed from those living in all-men or all women's centers. The freshman who thinks college should be a social playground sometimes finds the coed atmosphere so tempting that studies take second place. Miss Greenleaf suggests that students and staff should set up specific hours for study and leisure and that certain areas should be designated for study only.

I would agree with this suggestion but unless the tone of the institution is primarily academic, I question the amount of effect implementation of such controls would have on the socially oriented freshman. The question becomes one of qualifications of those living in coed housing. Should there be an age or class status requirement for living in coed housing? Should there be any other kinds of requirements?

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES

Coeducation housing at U. C. L. A. was initially incorporated into the residence hall program to make on-campus housing more attractive to students. The students live in coeducational buildings with divided floors. Almost all the residence hall space at U. C. L. A. is in coeducational halls, and the approximately ten per cent of the student population who live on campus are admitted on a first come, first served basis. Students who have lived in coed units as underclassmen tend to return to coeducational housing in following years. The grade point average of students living in coed housing does not differ significantly from that of students living in non-coed housing.

The residence halls are under the administration of an Associate Dean of Students' Housing, who is responsible for both men and women's housing and reports to the Dean of Students. The living centers are governed cooperatively by men and women students, and a man is likely to hold the top leadership position. There are no separate governing bodies for men and women. Standards of conduct are set up by the university administration and students in the living centers. Standards regarding curfew and other regulatory measures are not the same for men and women, but the respondent to the questionnaire did not indicate specifically how they differ. Men and women are allowed to visit each other in their rooms only during official open houses, which occur about once a week, usually

on Sunday.

Response to the questionnaire indicates that in general the student, administrative, faculty, and alumni response has been highly positive. The evaluations of four U. C. L. A. students participating on a panel at the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Association of College and University Housing Officers would seem to support a conclusion of highly favorable student response. Mary Currie reported the viewpoint that a greater number of varied opportunities are provided by coeducational residence halls. "We feel," she says, "that coeducational residence halls provide a greater opportunity for activities in all areas of cultural, social, and recreational situations."[1] Miss Currie suggests three reasons for a wider variety of activities in coed living centers: (1) ideas coming from both men's and women's groups, (2) spirit of competition between men's and women's floors, which encourages interest in planning and participating in activities, and (3) more people to initiate and carry out the activities.[2]

During the same panel discussion another U. C. L. A. student applauded coed living for its encouragement in developing "social graces." Men and women are confronted with the opportunity, or situation, of seeing each other under a variety of circumstances and "in all of their moods." Rick Johnson considers this a valuable learning experience. The coeducational setting forces the shy person ". . . to be more socially active and to meet more people," and it

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[1]"Co-ed Housing: The Student Viewpoint," report of the Fifteenth Annual Conference, A.C.U.H.O. (1963), 250.

[2]Ibid., p.251.

provides more socially oriented persons a setting in which to ". . . continue his social development."[1]

Another student spoke from the point of view of the foreign or out-of-state student living in a coed residence hall. He felt that coed living provides a foreign student with ". . . better exposure to members of the opposite sex" and offers ". . . a better picture of how men and women interact and the social customs of their society." This student sees casual contact among men and women as the most advantageous aspect of a coeducational living situation.[2]

Although these students had a generally positive view of coed housing, their negative reactions should not be overlooked. From the male point of view, difficulties are almost inevitable when a fellow is dating two different girls and they are all three living in the same dormitory. Cafeterias and lounges must double for study areas, and since they are open to the general public, students often "drop in" for a social visit and lure other students away from their books for extended periods of time.[3]

From the women's point of view, the "double standard" regarding curfews is a complaint, as well as the inaccessibility of the refreshment areas to women after curfew. Girls also miss casual breakfasts in robes and curlers that are possible in an all-women's dorm, but not in a coed dining room. According to Miss Currie public display of affection has been a serious problem in the coed halls.[4]

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[1] Ibid., pp.251-52.

[2] Ibid., pp.252-53.

[3] Ibid., pp.254-55.

[4] Ibid., pp.255-56.

Apparently the positive aspects of coeducational housing at U. C. L. A. are dominant, for the response to my questionnaire indicates that the program will be continued and expanded in the future. The respondent says tersely and convincingly, "We are 100% sold. In addition to making the halls very attractive to students, it has increased participation in cultural, social, and recreational programs."

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

In contrast to the American college tradition of separating men's and women's dormitories geographically on the campus, the resident students at the State University of New York at Albany have always lived in coeducational complexes. All of the students live in residence quadrangles which consist of eight three-story buildings and a twenty-two-story tower. The quadrangles are coeducational, but men and women reside in separate buildings. The dining, recreation and social areas are coeducational.

Responsibility for individual halls rests with a staff of Residence Directors, and each quadrangle has a Coordinator. All residences are headed by a Director of Residences and an Assistant Director of Residences. The Director of Residences reports to the Vice President and Associate Deans of Students. Personnel functions are not determined by sex.

There is a coeducational governing board for each quadrangle, and a man is more likely to hold the top leadership position than a woman. There are also separate governing bodies for men and women within the individual residence halls.

Standards of conduct at Albany are determined by the university administration, a school-wide governing body, and students in the living centers. The "double standard" prevails here also. The men have no curfews or overnight signout regulations, whereas the women do. Open houses in the upstairs residence areas provide

opportunity for students to visit one another during a scheduled social activity. The respondent to the questionnaire noted that there is presently a proposal to change this visitation procedure, but she did not specify the type of change which has been suggested.

Coeducational housing complexes are taken for granted at Albany State, and it will be continued in the future, although there are no present plans to expand the coeducational housing program.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the University of Massachusetts 14% of the resident students live in coeducational housing, and interest is the only qualification. Men and women may choose to live in separate buildings with a central structure for joint use or in a coeducational building with an alternate floor arrangement. The living centers are administered by housing officers from the staff of the Dean of Men and the staff of the Dean of Women and faculty members.

There are both cooperative and separate governing bodies in the living centers, and the response on the questionnaire seems to indicate that a woman is equally as likely to hold the top leadership position in cooperative government as a man. Standards regarding curfew and other regulatory measures are the same for men and women. Students have "visitation" privileges during open houses and specific visiting hours. Standards of conduct are determined by a joint student-administrative body called the Student Life Committee and by each house government.

Student, administrative, faculty, and alumni response to coed housing has been highly positive. Students tend to return to coed housing after living in a coed unit or dormitory, but no conclusive assessment has been made of the effects of coeducational housing on grade point average or attrition rate. The University of Massachusetts plans to continue its coeducational housing program and to expand its program in the future.

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

A new philosophy of undergraduate residence living was introduced at the University of Rochester when in 1962 the doors of "the Towers" were open to junior and senior men and women. It was the feeling at Rochester that men and women living in the same area is more natural than complete separation of the sexes. In the Manual for Towers Residents it is stated that "The philosophy of a community of residents is at the heart of this residential complex. . . Community living encompasses the concept of mature and responsible individual concern for one another and the community."[1]

The Towers combine a coeducational alternate floor arrangement with a suite plan. Both Anderson and Wilder Towers are nine-floor buildings, composed primarily of suites. The suite area has four single bedrooms and one double bedroom, a bath, and a lounge facility. Most floors have double rooms in the center. In addition. there are kitchen and ironing room facilities on each floor.[2] One dining room adjacent to the two buildings serves all Towers residents. A faculty family occupies a first-floor apartment in each hall, and faculty members may occupy two smaller apartments available in each Tower. An office on the first floor of Wilder Tower accommodates the Business Manager of the Residence Halls, and the Director of Residence Halls has an office in Anderson Tower.

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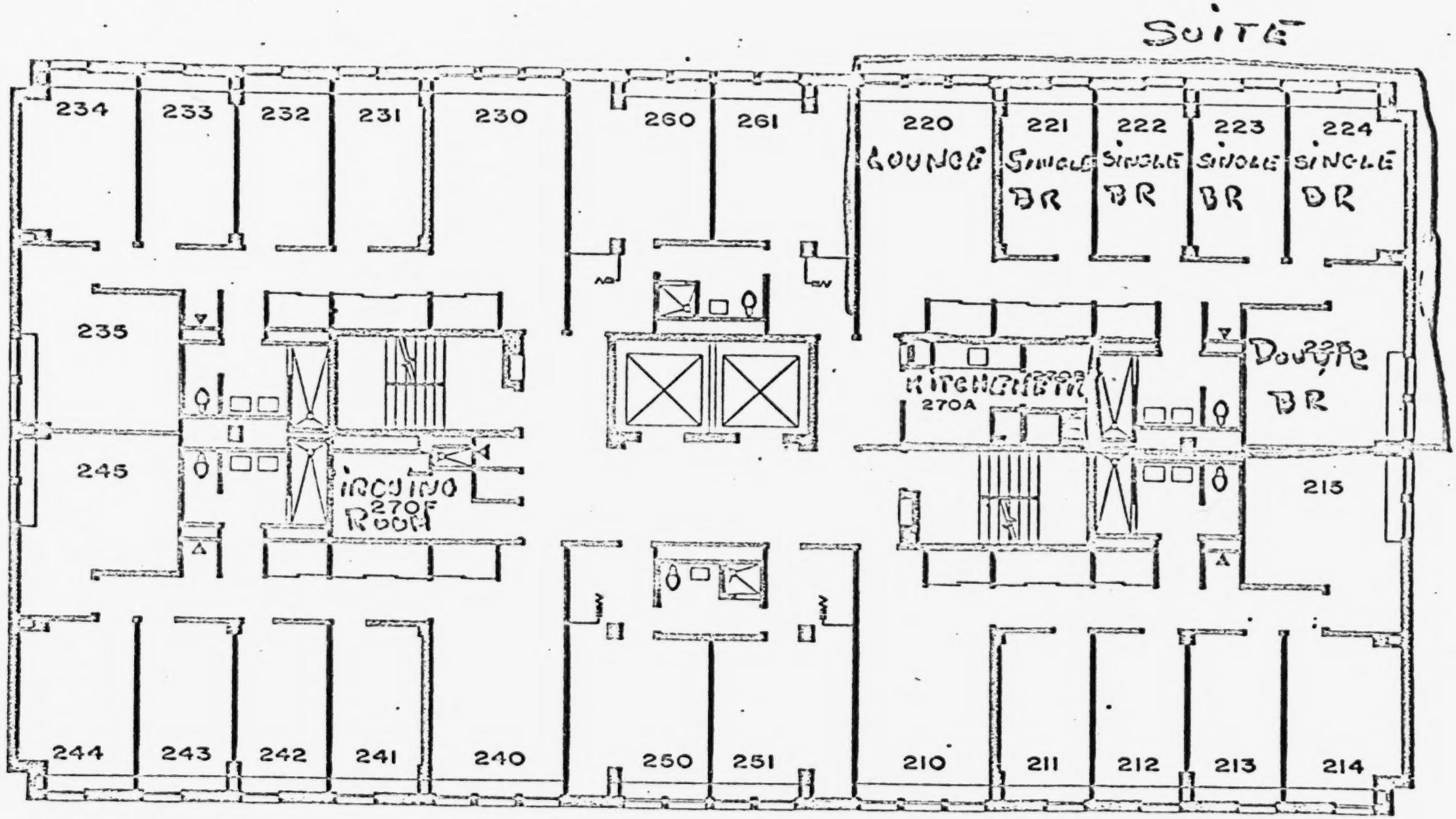
[1]p.1

[2]See floor plan, next page.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TOWERS 2 - 9

Only juniors and seniors who have demonstrated mature behavior may live in the Towers, but most applicants are admitted. They compose about twenty per cent of the Rochester resident student population. Male and female students live on alternate floors and have no curfews. Students may visit each other twenty-four hours daily in the private lounges and in their bedrooms between 12 P. M. and 3 A. M. Dr. Jere Paddack, Director of Residence Halls writes:

> We feel that by the time students reach the age of juniors or seniors they have a sufficient amount of maturity to take a greater responsibility in governing their personal lives. This does not mean that we abdicate responsibility for the maintenance of the physical plant and a concern for student behavior, but we place a greater responsibility upon the individual student to respond in appropriate ways to his interaction with other persons.[1]

The living centers are governed cooperatively by men and women students and the top leadership position is shared by a man and a woman on a co-chairmanship basis. A campus-wide student-administration group sets the broad outlines for standards of conduct and passes or rejects individual area proposals from the coed residence halls. The average grade point average is higher in the coed halls, but Dr. Paddack feels this is possibly related to the lower attrition rate among upperclassmen. Students report that they are less anxious living in the Towers than in all-men's or all-women's halls, and he feels this could be another factor affecting grade point average.

The Towers are administered by a Director of Residence Halls, who reports to the Dean of Students. On the basis of the philosophy of individual responsibility, there is no resident advisory staff in the Towers, and this necessitates knowledge and implementation of

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[1]In a letter to the author, November 17, 1966.

university policy and regulations by the students themselves. Those who do not fulfill these responsibilities may be asked to leave the Towers.

In general, student response to coeducational housing at the University of Rochester has been highly positive. Administrative response has been moderately positive, and faculty response has been moderately positive to neutral. The questionnaire indicates that alumni response has been moderately negative, but Mr. Paddack qualifies this response in the following manner. "Many have not had the experience of living in coed halls and have misconceptions of what actually takes place in the halls. Those that see the set-up and talk with students are favorably impressed."

A summary of student comments by Vincent Nowlis, Professor of Psychology, adds more specific insight into student response to coeducational living at the University of Rochester. In 1964 Dr. Nowlis sent letters to students who had lived in the Towers, asking what this living experience had meant to them as persons, and received letters back from forty-nine students. Three features of the Towers were consistently singled out for comment: "(1) the six-person suite arrangement; (2) the occupancy of the same building by both men and women; and (3) the general liberalization of parietal regulations and the elimination of an advisory staff."[1] With respect to the coeducational feature, Dr. Nowlis summarizes the students' response in the following manner:

> All the good qualities of the suite arrangement were enhanced by the coeducational feature: 1) members of

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[1]Letter to past and present residents of the Towers from Dr. Vincent Nowlis, August 26, 1964, p.1.

> the opposite sex could be, and usually were, included in all the activities that went on in the lounge; 2) the greater diversity and spontaneity of social activities made it easier to learn to know one of the opposite sex as a person rather than as a potential date or competitive student; 3) both men and women respondents said that the Towers environment was conducive to healthier and more realistic perceptions of the opposite sex than was any other environment in which they previously had lived; 4) the increased naturalness of male-female interaction led to greater freedom in the dating situation, both in terms of what one did or did not do on a date and in how that date was perceived by others.
>
> It is obvious that the student in the Towers program has abundant opportunities to learn to get along with members of the opposite sex and that generally these opportunities were positively evaluated by the respondents. The one commonly reported difficulty with the second major feature was the social regulation which prohibits heterosexual entertaining in one's bedroom.[1]

It appears, then, that coeducational housing at the University of Rochester has enjoyed outstanding success. The particularly liberal philosophy behind the Towers program seems to have an extremely positive appeal in an age when young people are asking for more and more freedom and seem to be willing to shoulder the responsibility which must be freedom's companion.

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[1] Ibid., p.2. Apparently the latter regulation has since been changed since Dr. Paddack indicates bedroom visiting is allowed between 12 P.M. and 3 A.M.

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY, THE BROOKLYN CENTER

Since The Brooklyn Center of Long Island University is largely a commuter school, its residence hall program is different from any of those institutions already considered. In view of the commuter aspect and limited space, Conolly Hall was constructed to accommodate all students and faculty desiring to reside on campus. The objective of the residence hall program is ". . . to provide a healthful, pleasant, stimulating environment conducive to mental, social, and emotional growth; and to encourage cooperation for the common good and welfare of the residents."[1]

Conolly Hall is a modern sixteen-story building located on the campus in downtown Brooklyn. It consists of ninety-one apartments, 147 dormitory rooms, offices, and lounges. There are seven dormitory floors (four men's and three women's), four student apartment floors (two men's and two women's), three adult apartment floors (for married students, graduate students, faculty, and administration),one floor of offices, and the lobby floor. More freshmen than upperclassmen live in the residence hall, since most upperclassmen tend to live at home or in nearby apartment houses.

The residence hall is operated by a Residence Hall Manager and a Director of Resident Students, both of whom live in the hall and are responsible to the Dean of Students.

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[1]From a statement prepared and sent to me by Mr. John G. Eggert, IV, Director of Residents, December 8, 1966.

Two student counselors aid the Director of Resident Students in establishing and enforcing dormitory regulations and are available to students as one source of counseling service.

Men and women students govern the residence hall cooperatively, and the top leadership position is more likely to be a man than a woman. The Dormitory Council is elected by the resident students and works to develop social, athletic, educational, and cultural programs for the hall. The Dorm Council selects members for Judicial Board, which handles cases referred to it by the Director of Resident Students. There are curfew regulations for freshmen and sophomore women but no curfew regulations for men and junior and senior women. There are established visiting hours for members of the opposite sex on Sundays from 2 to 7 P.M.

Students who have lived in coed housing at Long Island as underclassmen tend to return, and student response in general has been highly positive. Administrative response has been moderately positive. Faculty response has been neutral, and alumni response highly positive. They will continue coed housing at Long Island and plan to expand the program. The following is an evaluation of coeducational housing by the Director of Resident Students:

> For the most part, there are few discipline problems attributable primarily because this is a coeducational Residence Hall. Generally the students are sensible and mature, which formulates my opinion that coeducational housing is working extremely well at Long Island University. . . . there is some apathy and lack of interest on the part of the resident students towards social events, etc., but I feel that this is due to the size and wide diversity of a city college rather than inherent in the Residence Hall.
>
> My personal opinion is that coeducational housing promotes and fosters mature behavior and

student attitudes, helps them adjust more easily to members of the opposite sex, and serves as a regulating factor for the actions, dress, and language of the residents. A coeducational dormitory is a realistic approach for the city college to educate and prepare its students to assume their role in our society today.[1]

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[1]Statement sent to me by Mr. John G. Eggert, December 8, 1966.

ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

Coeducational living units were incorporated into the housing program at St. Lawrence University with two purposes in mind: (1) to give greater housing flexibility and (2) to experiment with coeducational housing. The housing is designed to house men and women in separate wings with lounge facilities for common use. Approximately one-sixth of the resident students presently live in coed units. Although there are no special qualifications to live in coed residences, upperclassmen have first preference. Underclassmen who have had a coed living experience tend to return to coed housing, especially the men. No assessment has been made of the effects of coeducational housing on grade point average, attrition rate, etc.

The coed units are under the cooperative administration of the staff of the Dean of Men and the staff of the Dean of Women. Men and women students govern the living center cooperatively, and the top leadership position is more likely to be held by a man than a woman. Standards of conduct are decided by the college administration, a school-wide governing body, and the students in the living center. Women have curfews; men do not. Students are allowed to visit one another in the lounge area until 1 A.M. and in their rooms during open houses.

Student response has been highly positive, and administrative response has been moderately positive. The respondent was not able

to estimate faculty or alumni response. Robert E. Thelsabuk, Assistant Dean of Men, reports that "The coed arrangement seems to have been well accepted as a natural and comfortable living situation. The government has been unusually active as compared with the one-sexed halls. As the Head Resident of the hall, I give it my complete endorsement." The coeducational housing program will be continued and expanded at St. Lawrence University.

DAVIS AND ELKINS COLLEGE

Davis and Elkins is a small Presbyterian-related college located in Elkins, West Virginia. Coeducational units are being constructed to provide flexibility in use of the residence halls when the male-female ratio varies from year to year. When the halls are used to house both men and women, the floors are divided vertically. There are no students living in coed housing during the present school year. There are no special qualifications, and most students would prefer to live in a coed living center. There have been no studies conducted to determine the effect of coed housing on grade point average or attrition rate.

Administration is on a cooperative basis by the staff of the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women. The men and women have separate governing bodies. "Visitation" privileges are restricted to the common lounge area during designated dating hours. Women have curfews, but the men do not. The college administration sets up standards of conduct, but they are subject to review by a Student Hall Council, which may make suggestions and is responsible for enforcing regulations.

Both student and administrative response has been highly positive, but new units which are to be constructed to meet increased enrollment will continue to be used as coed units only as fluctuation in male-female damands it. At Davis and Elkins coed housing is not seen as an integral part of the educational program.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Coeducational complexes have been a part of the housing program at the University of Oregon for over a decade. Residence halls at Oregon are constructed to accommodate either men or women as the needs dictate. Each complex has several units, each of which houses sixty to ninety men or women. Dining halls and recreation areas are coeducational. At the University of Oregon it is believed that coeducational housing makes residences more natural, inspires better dress and conduct, and diminishes the novelty of the "others" so that there is less intrigue with raids.

The units are administered by the staffs of the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women, but not on a cooperative basis. There are a Housing Department Staff and Housing Personnel. Women's units are provided with house mothers and staff counselors, and the men's units have graduate resident advisors.

Men and women students govern the living complexes cooperatively, and a man is more likely to hold the top leadership position than a woman. Standards of conduct are decided by a school-wide governing body. In two women's dorms, there are no curfews, but in general, the women have curfew regulations, whereas the men do not. Visiting between sexes is limited to the lounge, recreation, and dining areas.

Ninety per cent of the students at Oregon live in coed centers, and there are no special qualifications for admission.

Since nearly all of the buildings are coed, students who have had the coed experience return in following years.

Both students and administrative response to coed housing has been highly positive. The respondent was not able to estimate faculty and alumni response. Coed housing is well established at the University of Oregon, and because of the variety of benefits it affords, the program will be continued and expanded.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The first of Michigan State's living-learning residence halls was opened in the fall of 1961, and coeducational housing was a part of the plan. The living complexes consist of separate buildings with a central structure for joint use. The central connecting structure consists of a grill, recreation facilities, dining hall, classrooms, general science laboratories, faculty and administrative offices, library, and auditorium. Since 1961 one or two similar halls have been opened each year with the purpose being ". . . to enhance the cultural and intellectual life of those who live in them"[1] It is felt that reduction of the impersonal atmosphere inherent in many large dormitories is one way to accomplish this and that certain elements such as a library with study space, student affairs office, full-time professional counselors for vocational and personal counseling, wide offering of courses in the buildings, and an extensive range of co-curricular activities are important to the achievement of this goal.[2]

The administration of the complexes is on a cooperative basis by the staff of the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women. A Head Advisor in each hall coordinates the personnel program. Two Graduate

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[1]Edward B. Blackman. "Residence Halls as an Integral Part of the Learning Environment." Current Issues in Higher Education (1966), 250.

[2]Ibid.

Advisors or an Assistant Advisor workswith each Head Advisor to assist in the planning of activities, athletics, hall government, recreational and social programs. A student Resident Assistant lives on each floor to help students get acquainted, and to encourage interest and involvement in university and living center activities.[1]

There are separate governing bodies for men and women students, and regulations are set up by a combined group of students and administrators. Women have closing hours, but there are no closing hours for men. Coeds are not allowed to visit one another in their rooms.

Eighty-five per cent of the resident students reside in the coed living complexes, and there are no special qualifications for the students to live there. Students tend to return to coed housing after having a coeducational living experience. The coed complexes provide an opportunity for male and female students to eat, study, go to classes, recreate, etc., together. Edward Blackman reports that "An occasional faculty member or visitor expresses concern about hand-holding or public display of affection. Yet thus far there has been little evidence of serious departure from appropriate standards of behavior."[2] He goes on to express the observation that "Student deportment is generally casual but not lacking in dignity and the rather matter-of-fact relationships that prevail between the sexes seem wholesome and desirable for the development of social maturity."[3]

The academic performance of those living in ~~conventional~~

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[1]Student Housing, 1967-68, Michigan State University Brochure.

[2]"Residence Halls as an Integral Part of the Learning Environment," p.251.

[3]Ibid.

in the coed complexes is slightly higher than that of students living in conventional living centers. Mr. Blackman attributes this primarily the favorable conditions of the center for faculty-student discussions and contact within the dormitory.[1]

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[1]Ibid.

SUMMARY

The information about and reactions to coeducational housing in institutions of higher learning which I have been able to gather seems to imply that coed living can add a plus factor to the total educational process. In his evaluation of coeducational housing at the University of Illinois, M. E. Siebert contends that the success of the program rests on the intangible benefits. He writes in explanation:

> The student sociability, responsibility and intelligent thinking that have characterized the program at Illinois are benefits students don't usually get in the classroom, but they can learn them by eating and working together.[1]

The above statement could apply to almost all the coeducational housing programs discussed in this paper. The generally positive response to coed housing, especially on the part of the students and administrators, might be reason enough in itself for personnel staffs in other institutions to propose the initiation of coeducational housing, at least on an experimental basis.

A number of specific advantages of coed living seem to be dominant and recurring. Coeducational structures can mean more effective use of space in two ways: (1) the elimination of the possibility of unused rooms when there are fluctuations in the male-female ratio, and (2) savings in construction cost when sharing of

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[1]M. E. Seibert. "Integrated Living Newest Trend in Dormitory Planning." College and University Business, XXVI (April, 1959), 42.

public areas eliminates the need for separate facilities.[1] The coed arrangement provides a "natural" setting which encourages interaction between men and women on a casual basis and thus better understanding of one another in terms of interests, needs, responsibilities, etc. The coed atmosphere is a closer semblance of the societal structure to which students were accustomed before college and in which they will have to operate after college. Social behavior in terms of dress and conduct is generally improved in coed living centers, as well as manners in the dining halls. The students develop valuable skills in working together in student government and ". . . joint participation in coeducational programs and social activities seems to lead to more mature relationships between men and women."[2] Allen, Gee, Collins, and Nudd would add that ". . . the experience of planning together with the plans of their fellow students in mind adds to the development of student leaders."[3] More creative cultural, educational, and social programs are likely to emanate from a co-educational group since the variety of ideas will usually be broader in scope.

Most of the problems which coeducational housing has presented can be at least partially eliminated by careful planning of residence halls, attention to student government structures, and provision of a well-trained and informed personnel staff.

Robert Crane reminds us that ". . . so important in any

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[1]Harold C. Riker. College Students Live There, p.53.

[2]Ibid.

[3]J. A. Allen et al. "Co-educational Residence Halls," Journal of College Student Personnel, VI, No.2 (1964), 83.

major residence hall undertaking is that there is a 'design for living' in which it is recognized that buildings can make individuals' lives either more or less confining."[1] Anyone who has lived in a dormitory could not deny this statement. Those involved in dormitory planning should keep in mind the girls who would like to be able to make use of refreshment machine areas after curfew and the students who encounter embarrassing situations when they are dating two people at the same time. Coordinated planning of buildings is a must. Too often students and personnel people are left out of planning committees, and they are likely to be the ones who can best define what kinds of things should go on in the living center and thus what kind of 'design for living' is needed.

In the majority of cases where the living center is governed cooperatively, a man is more likely to hold the top leadership position than a woman. The opportunities for women to benefit from leadership experience are thus lessened in the coed situation. I would agree with Miss Greenleaf that there should be constitutional provisions to eliminate this inequality.[2] Perhaps the University of Rochester has the best answer to the problem in its provision for shared leadership on a co-chairmanship basis.

There must be full cooperation and teamwork between men's and women's staffs. If there is to be coeducational housing, there should be "coeducational staffing." Just as in the case of student government, leadership positions should be assigned on the basis of ability rather than sex. I am inclined to agree with J. A. Allen

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[1]"More Colleges are Planning Coed Housing," 48.

[2]"Co-educational Residence Halls: An Evaluation," pp.110-111.

et al, who go so far as to say that the success of coed housing depends largely on the philosophy of the staff and their understanding of both men and women residents. There is a need for staff orientation to the possibilities inherent in coed housing, so that they in turn can be creative and help the students understand the potentials in such living arrangements.[1]

In most cases women students have curfews and men do not. I would suggest that if men and women are going to live together in cooperative communities, regulations should be the same for both. Coeducational housing at Rochester was praised for its liberation from parietal constraints, and I agree with the philosophy that students should be allowed to be responsible.

I see coeducational housing as an exciting addition to the American college scene. Heterogeneity is considered by most progressive educators as a positive attribute for a college population. By the same token, coeducational housing adds variety and diversity to the already existing campus housing programs and thus provides the potential for a wider range of experience for the college student.

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[1]"Coeducational Residence Halls," p.84.

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*Not available to me locally as source of information for this paper.

ADDENDUM

Subsequent to the submission of this paper, questionnaires were returned by housing officers at Stanford University and the State University of New York at Brockport. Following is a summary of the information received.

The coeducational buildings at Stanford University are in final design and will be open in September, 1968. The impetus for beginning coeducational housing came primarily from favorable experience with coed housing at European campuses and from faculty and student demand. Approximately ten percent of the resident student population will live in coed buildings with central structures for joint use. There will be no special qualifications for living in a coed residence hall. The Office of the Dean of Students is responsible for administration, and men and women students will govern the residence halls cooperatively. Women have very relaxed control over hours, etc., and men have no curfews. Students may visit one another in their rooms during certain hours. Policies regarding standards of conduct are made by the university administration and a school-wide student governing body. Student, administrative, and faculty response to coed housing has been highly positive, and alumni response moderately positive. Stanford plans to expand its coeducational housing program in the future.

The housing program at the State University of New York at Brockport is coeducational in two respects. Men and women students share common lounges and use coordinating councils as a vehicle for program and activity. Administration is on

a cooperative basis by the staff of the Dean of Women and the staff of the Dean of Men, and there are separate governing bodies for men and women students. Women have curfews, but men do not. At Brockport they are presently experimenting with Sunday visiting hours in one of the men's residence halls. Standards of conduct are set up by the university administration. Approximately thirty-five percent of the resident student population is residing in coed housing, and underclassmen who have had a coeducational living experience tend to return in following years. There are no special qualifications for residents. Student and administrative response has been highly positive and faculty and alumni response neutral. The program will be continued and expanded.

In evaluation of the coeducational program at Brockport, Thomas E. Matthews, Coordinator of Men's Residence Halls, writes that there has been a decided improvement in behavior and dress, especially for men. He believes that the most valuable aspect is the realistic home-like atmosphere of the lounge areas, and that "panty raids" have declined because of liberal hours in the coed lounges. Privacy is provided for both men and women in the form of separate lounges. Mr. Matthews considers the experimentation with visitation privileges to have been successful from the point of view of students and staff since it seems to be a realistic means of providing privacy for students. In conclusion he writes:

> We are quite satisfied with the present structure of the coeducational approach. In general, there are less problems associated with our program than when we had separate buildings and completely separate programs.